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PAÑCHĀLAS AND THEIR CAPITAL
AHICHCHHATRA

BY
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PREFACE

In this monograph an attempt has been made to trace the history of Pañchāla and its capital Ahichchhatra through ancient Indian literature supplemented by the evidence of the itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims and relevant numismatic data. As regards the archæological remains at Ahichchhatra I should like to draw the readers' attention to Cunningham's Archæological Survey of India Reports, Vol. I, pp. 255 foll. For the convenience of the readers, a map of Pañchāla has been given at the end.

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PAÑCHĀLAS AND THEIR CAPITAL AHICHCHHATRA

1 The Pañchālas and their kingdom

Pañchāla, like many other countries of ancient India, may be supposed to have derived its name from the people who occupied and established their supremacy over it. Accordingly the suggestion has been mooted that it came to be known as Pañchāla only when it became the home of no fewer than five Vedic tribes, the Krivis, the Turvaśas, the Keśins, the Śrīñjayas and the Somakas, who eventually merged into one nationality with the Krivis as the original predominant element in their unity.¹ The incidental mention of the Sindhu (Indus) and the Asiknī (Chenab) along with the Krivis in a separate verse of a hymn in the R̥g-Veda² is not sufficient to establish the connection of the Krivis with any region between those two rivers.³ But the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa definitely says that the Pañchālas were in ancient times called Krivis,⁴ which may be taken to suggest that the Krivis could not but be a very important factor among the people of Pañchāla.

The Paurāṇic tradition, however, does not lend support to the above theory. The Purāṇas ingeniously suggest a derivation of the name, according to which, the kingdom came to be called Pañchāla from the fact that for its king five able (*samartha*) sons were deemed enough to guard or protect the five provinces (*pañcha alam*).⁵ As Pargiter puts it, "It obviously began popularly as a jocose nickname, applied to his five sons, the 'Five Capables', and naturally would have required time to come into ordinary use."⁶ The names of the five princes vary, though not materially, in different Purāṇas, one, the *Bhāgavata* (IX. Ch. 21), giving them as Mudgala, Yavīnara, Brihadviśa, Kāmpilya and Sañjaya; another, the *Vishṇu* (Ch. XIX. Aṅka 4), introducing them as Mudgala, Śrīñjaya, Brihadishu, Pravīra and Kāmpilya; the third, the *Vāyu* (Ch. 99), as Mudgala, Śrīñjaya, Brihadishu, Yavīyāna and Kāmpilya; and the fourth, the *Agni* (Ch. 278), as Mukula, Śrīñjaya, Brihadishu, Yavīnara and Krimila. One at least among these names, *viz.*, Sañjaya or Śrīñjaya, is apt to remind us of the Vedic tribe of that name. The Purāṇas seem to suggest that the five princes were the founders of five cities in five provinces, each city having been named after its founder. The Purāṇas also differ from one another as to the name and particulars of the king who was the father of those five princes. The *Bhāgavata*

¹ Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 469; B. C. Law, *Ancient Mid-Indian Kṣatriya Tribes*, Vol. I, pp. 51-52; Ray Chaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, 4th ed., p. 59.

² Law, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 48; Ray Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Cf. Zimmer's view (*Altindisches Leben*, p. 103) upheld in the *Vedic Index*, I, p. 198.

³ *R̥g-Veda*, VIII, 20, 24; VIII, 22, 12.

⁴ *Śatapatha Br.*, XIII, 5, 4, 7.

⁵ *Vishṇu P.*, Ch. 19, Aṅka 4, *Vāyu.*, Ch. 99.

⁶ *JRAS*, 1918, p. 238.

Purāṇa calls him Bharmāśva, born in the family of Dushmanta : the *Vishṇu* introduces him as Haryaśva, born in the family of Haryu : the *Vāyu*, as Riksha, born in the family of Dvimīḍha : and the *Īg.* as Haryaśva, born in the family of Kuru.¹

As for the antiquity of the name Pañchāla, it is not met with in any of the extant R̥ig-vedic hymns. It is quite likely that in the R̥ig-Vedic period there was no separate kingdom known by the name of Pañchāla.² The Pañchālas themselves as a people then passed as Krivis. The name of Pañchāla as a distinct kingdom became well known when the Brāhmaṇas of different Vedas were compiled. The name of Pañchāla often forming a dual group with Kuru comes before us prominently not only in the Pāli Nikāya list of sixteen Mahājanapadas,³ not only in some of the pre-Buddhistic Upanishads, Āraṇyakas and Brāhmaṇas but even in some of the recensions of the Yajur-Veda, the same name in its plural form standing both for the land and the people who inhabited it. The Kāṇva recension of the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* (XI, 3, 3) mentions the Kuru-Pañchālas. The *Kāthaka Samhitā* (XXX, 2) speaks of the Pañchālas as the people of Keśin Dālbhya. The same Vedic text (X, 6) alludes to the performance of the Naimishīya sacrifice in the land of the Kuru-Pañchālas. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VIII, 14) mentions the Pañchālas along with the Purus, as one of the peoples in the Mid-land (*Madhyamā dik*). The *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII, 5, 4, 7) refers in several of its passages to the land, kings and people of Kuru-Pañchāla. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (I, 8, 4, 1, 2) speaks of the periodical military expeditions undertaken by the kings of Kuru-Pañchāla. The *Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa* introduces the Kuru-Pañchālas in several contexts. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (I, 2, 9) mentions the Kuru-Pañchālas in an interesting list of similar other groups, the Aṅga-Magadhas, the Kāśī-Kośalas, the Śālva-Matsyas, etc. anticipating the Pāli list of sixteen Mahājanapadas. The Upanishad references to the Kuru-Pañchālas need not be cited, coming as they do after the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas. The mention in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII, 5, 4, 7) of an ancient king of Pañchāla, known by the name of Kraivya Pañchāla is, however, important as indicating the historical connection of the Krivis with the Pañchālas. It is not only the name of Pañchāla that goes back to the period covered by the *Yajur-Veda* and the Brāhmaṇas, but that of its capital, Kāmpīlya, as well. The *Yajur-Veda-Samhitās* (*Vedic Index*, I, 149) apply the epithet Kāmpīla-vāsini to a woman who was perhaps the king's chief queen, the Kāmpīla of the epithet obviously standing for the town of that name, the Kāmpīlya of later literature.

Whether we assume that the Pañchālas had originally formed a confederacy of five tribes or put faith in the Paurāṇic legend stating that the first king of the

¹ Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53. See Pargiter on "The North Pañchāla Dynasty" in *JRAS.* 1918, pp. 229-248; also on "Kuru-Pañchāla" in *Ibid.*, 1920, pp. 99-102.

² See Pargiter on this point, *JRAS.* 1918, p. 238. According to him, a long line of kings, beginning with Ajamidha, had reigned in North Pañchāla previous to the time when the kingdom acquired the name of Pañchāla. In this connection he seeks to establish a correspondence between the Paurāṇic genealogy and the Vedic tradition of the kings of North Pañchāla.

³ Cf. Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, Ch. III, p. 8.

Pañchālas had five able sons to govern five provinces, we cannot but think that the kingdom of Pañchāla was once known to have been divided into five portions. How the five divisions were designated and discriminated we cannot exactly say. The *Samhitopanishad Brahmanā*, however, speaks of the Prāchyas or Eastern Pañchālas,¹ a fact which may warrant us to infer the existence of the Pañchālas who were distinguished as Pratichya or Western. The Jātaka and the *Mahābhārata*, as we shall see anon, narrate different stories of the rise of two political divisions of the Pañchāla country, distinguished as Pañchāla Proper or Dakshiṇa Pañchāla and Uttara or Northern Pañchāla. If so, the supposed five divisions may be taken to have been distinguished as Eastern, Western, Southern, Northern, and Central.

The *Kāthaka Samhitā* (XXX. 2) alludes to a time when the Pañchālas became divided into three sections, and that as a result of certain rites performed by Keśin Dālbhya. It is certain that from the age of the Jātaka and the *Mahābhārata*, Pañchāla became permanently divided into two well-defined kingdoms, viz. Dakshiṇa Pañchāla with Kāmpilya as its capital, and Uttara Pañchāla with Ahichchhatra as its principal town. According to the Chetiya Jātaka, the city (i.e., the kingdom) of Uttara Pañchāla was founded by a Chedi prince who was advised by the family priest, Kapila, to leave by the north gate (*uttaradvāreṇa*) of the capital of his father.² The *Mahābhārata* relates altogether a different story, according to which the division of the kingdom of Pañchāla into two was effected by a treaty entered into by the Brahmin teacher, Droṇa, with Drupada, the then king of Pañchāla, after the latter had been defeated by the young Kuru pupils of the former, and seized and carried as a captive. Droṇa agreed to take the northern half of the kingdom which became known by the name of Ahichchhatra or Uttara Pañchāla, while Drupada continued to rule over the remaining half of his kingdom distinguished as Southern Pañchāla.³

2 Antiquity and origin of the name of the Pañchāla capital Ahichchhatrā

The name of *Ahichchhatrā* is not as old as that of Kāmpilya (Pāli Kāmpilla, Vedic Kāmpīla),⁴ although both figure in Indian literature as capitals of Pañchāla, the former of Uttara-Pañchāla and the latter of Dakshiṇa-Pañchāla. *Ahichchhatrā* (Skt. *Ahichchhatrā*) certainly finds mention in the Pabhosā cave inscription of Āśhādhasena⁵ which may be dated about the beginning of the Christian era. This is indeed the oldest epigraphic record mentioning the name of *Ahichchhatrā*. The Vedic name of *Ahichchhatrā* seems to have been *Parichakrā* (not *Parivakrā* which occurs as a variant),⁶ the name suggesting either that the city was founded on a circular site or that it had derived its name from a circular object. *Parichakra* as a sculptural term denotes a medallion or

¹ *Vedic Index*, I, p. 469.

² Faubell's *Jātaka*, Vol. III, pp. 460-1.

³ *Mbh.*, *Idi Parvan*, Ch. 140.

⁴ The *Yajur-Veda-Samhitā* (*Vedic Index*, I, p. 149), applies the local epithet *Kāmpīla-cūṣaṇī* to a woman, the Kāmpīla of the epithet standing obviously for the town of that name, the Kāmpilya of later literature.

⁵ Luders, *List* (E. I., X, Appendix) No. 905. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya (Sanskrit Text, p. 77) mentions *Ahichhatraka* as "a kind of pearl found at Ahichchhatra".

⁶ *Satapatha Br.*, III, 5, 4, 7. The walled city of Ahichchhatra is roughly a right-angled triangle in shape—Ed.]

⁸ Macmillan, *Amoy & India as described by Ptolemy*, p. 133.

chāla). In the *Mahābhārata*, however, the kingdom of which Ahichchhatrā was the capital is expressly called Ahichchhatra (*Ahichchhatraḥ vishayaḥ*) instead of Uttara Pañchāla.¹ But it is clearly hinted at in the same chapter of the Great Epic that by the kingdom of Ahichchhatra was meant nothing but Uttara Pañchāla. We are indeed told that the significance of the two adjectives *Uttara* (Northern) and *Dakṣiṇa* (Southern) lay in the fact that the northern half of Pañchāla forming a separate kingdom was situated to the north of or extended along the northern bank of the Ganges and the southern half was situated to the south of or extended along the southern bank of the Ganges. Thus the Ganges served as the dividing line or natural boundary between the two kingdoms, northern and southern.²

According to the *Mahābhārata*, the kingdom of southern Pañchāla extended as far north as the Bhāgirathī and as far south as the Charmanvatī (modern Chambal river). As for the extension of Northern Pañchāla towards the north, the Great Epic tells us nothing definitely.³

According to the Jaina *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, Kāmpilya, the capital of Pañchāla (*i.e.*, Southern Pañchāla), was situated on the bank of the Ganges.⁴ The country of Pañchāla (*i.e.*, Southern Pañchāla), is placed, however, in an eastern quarter of the southern portion of Central India (*Dakṣiṇa-Bhārata-khaṇḍe purve-dīśāe*). As for Ahichchhatrā, the Jaina account wrongly represents it as the capital of Kuru-jāṅgala,⁵ which is clearly distinguished in the *Mahābhārata* from the province of Ahichchhatra.⁶

Cunningham may be right in suggesting that the great kingdom of Pañchāla as a whole extended from the Himalayas to the Chambal river.⁷ The North Pañchāla embraced the whole of Rohilkhand to the north of the Ganges, while the South Pañchāla included the upper half of the Doab between the Ganges

¹ *Mahābhārata*, Bengal Ed., I, 138. 76-7 :

Ahichchhatraṇ-cha vishayam Drona samabhīpadyata |
Ecām rājan-ahichchhatrā-purī janapadāyutā ||

² *Ibid.*, I, 138. 70 :

Rājāḥ dakṣiṇe kule Bhāgirathyāhām-uttare |
Sakhāyam mām vijānāhi Pañchāla yadi manyase ||

³ *Ibid.*, I, 138. 74 :

Dakṣiṇaś-cha-pi Pañchālān gāraḥ-Charmanvatī nadī,

According to a Sanskrit verse cited in the *Śabala-Kalpa-druma*, the country of Pañchāla lay to the west as well as the north of Kurukshetra, a paragon of beauty :

Kurukshetrāt-paścime tu tathā ch-ōttaram-āgath |

Indraprastham Mahesām daśajjanakadraye |

Pāñchālād-śo devīḥ saundarya-gurva-bhūṣitah ||

⁴ *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, p. 50 : Tattha Gaṅgā-nāma-mahanal-taraṅga-pakkhalijjamāṇa-pāyāra-bhittiam Kampillapuram nāma nayaram. Cf. *Mahābhārata*, I, 138 : 73 : Mākandim-atha Gaṅgāyās-tīre janapadayutam |

So 'dhyāvasad dinamanāḥ Kāmpilyāṇ-cha purottamam ||

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶ *Mahābhārata*, V, 19, 29-30 :

Tataḥ Pañchānadaṇ-cha-iva kṛtsnāṇ-cha Kurujaṅgulam |

Tathā Rohitākāraṇyam marubhumī ś-cha kēvalā ||

Ahichchhatram Kālākūtam Gaṅgākūlāṇ-cha Bharata ||

Vāraṇam Vātadhānāṇ-cha Yāmunaś-cha-iva parvataḥ ||

⁷ *Ancient Geography of India*, p. 413.

Cunningham identifies the city of Kāmpilya with modern Kampil on the old Ganges between Budaon and Farokhabad,³ while in N. L. Dey's opinion it was situated at a distance of 28 miles north-east of Fathgad in the district of Farokhabad.⁴ The point which is in favour of Cunningham's identification is that the *Jama Firidhatīrthakalpa* definitely locates it on the Ganges.

Mr. Jwala Sahay Mishra inclines to identify Ahichchhattria with the modern village, Arura, which lies a little north of the village of Bhadaun in Patiala State,⁹ the accuracy of which is highly problematical.¹⁰

Some of the older Brāhmaṇas bear a clear testimony to the considerable military strength and political supremacy of the Pañchālas and their rulers. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII. 5. 4. 7), for instance, mentions Kraiyya, the king of Pañchāla, among the ancient monarchs of India, who had performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice. The *Brāhmaṇa* cites two *gīthās* or adulatory verses, one of which brings out the fact that at Parivakrā or Parichakrā, the Pañchāla overlord of the Krivis seized the horse which was meet for sacrifice with gifts of a hundred thousand heads of cattle.¹¹ The second verse hints at the magnificence of the horse-sacrifice performed by Kraiyya when it states that the Brahmins of the Pañchālas from every quarter assembled there and divided between them a

¹¹ *Kavirāṇāy, Pañcālān āpā Kavirāṇapate, ha, va, pañ, Pañcālān āchakshate tadatadgāthay-ābhayam, asanam madhyam-
atābhayā kavirāṇa-ut-pa, a-shah, Pāñcālān Parivakrāṇām, sabhasas'ata dakshinam-ate.* (XIII, 5, 4, 7.)

thousand myriads, and five and twenty hundred of gifts.¹ The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* says in connection with the *Mahābhisheka* of Indra, that the Pañchālas were one of the ruling peoples in the firmly established *Madhyamā-dik* or Midland,² who were anointed for kingship. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also informs us that the kings of the Kuru-Pañchālas performed also the Rājasūya sacrifice, as a proof, no doubt, of their political greatness. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (I. 8. 4. 1-2) tells us in the same strain how the kings of the Kuru-Pañchālas marched forth on raids in the winter season and returned in the summer.³ The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (IX. 39. 23) introduces us to another ancient and most powerful king of the Pañchālas by the name of Durmukha.⁴ He is said to have made extensive conquests in every direction. The Pāli Kumbhakāra Jātaka⁵ speaks probably of the same king, Durmukha, of Pañchāla (Uttara-Pañchāla, according to the Jātaka). The Buddhist Birth-story, however, relates an anecdote according to which King Durmukha abandoned his kingdom to attain the spiritual insight of a great saint (Pratyeka-Buddha) on the realisation of the dreadful effects of lust. The Jaina *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* spells the name of this ancient king of Pañchāla as Dvimukha.⁶

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII. 5. 4) cites several *gāthās* in praise of a third most powerful king of Pañchāla by the name of Soṇa Sātrāsāha who had performed a horse-sacrifice on a very grand scale. When the King was performing the sacrifice, wearing beautiful garments, Indra revelled in the Soma drink and the Brāhmaṇas were satiated with wealth (S. B. E., XLIV. p. 400). Two of the *gāthās* quoted in a Brāhmaṇa hint at the king having an army of 33,000 horses and 6,000 mail-clad men.

According to the *Mahābhārata*,⁷ the powerful king of Pañchāla at the time of the Kurukshetra battle was Drupada, from whose hands the northern portion of his kingdom was wrested by the Kurus who had established their Brahmin Guru, Droṇa, as king. King Drupada entered into a matrimonial alliance with the Kurus by marrying his daughter, Draupadī, *alias* Pāñchālī, to the five Pāṇḍava brothers. Pañchāla was at that time once attacked by Karna, king of Aṅga. The mighty Karna with a large army besieged the Pañchāla country, defeated Drupada in a battle, and exacted tribute from him and his sāmanta. Subsequently Bhīmasena, in course of his eastern expedition, invaded the Pañchāla country and by various stratagems brought it under his sway. During the Kurukshetra war, King Drupada of Pañchāla, then an ally of the Pāṇḍavas, helped the Pāṇḍavas with his son, Dhṛiṣṭadyumna and his *akṣauhini* army. Dhṛiṣṭadyumna was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the entire Pāṇḍava force. The battle proved, however, to be a disaster for the royal family of

¹ *Sahasraṁ-āsan-a-nyatā śatā cha pañchao mśatāh daktāh-daktāh Pañchālānām brāhmaṇā yā abhojya āt.* (XIII. 5. 4. 8).

² *At. Br., III. 38. 14. madhyamāyām prātiśthāyām diśiye k. cha kuru-Pañchālānām rājānah.* Cf. *Pañchālādī janapade Pañchālāmadyamāpravṛtte* (Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata).

³ *Śiśire kuru-Pañchālāh prāñcho yānti asantam cyacasāyād-nyantī.* etc.

⁴ *Durmukhaḥ Pañchālo rājā sanvidyayā samantam savatāh prathamajānam parivāya etc.*

⁵ Fausboll's *Jātaka*, Vol. III, p. 379; Cowell, English translation of the Jātaka, Vol. III, p. 230. *Uttara pañchālavatthe Kampallanayane Durmukho nāma rājā.*

⁶ *Jaina Sūtras*, (SBE), Part. II, p. 87.

⁷ *MBH., Ādiparvan*, Ch. 94; *Sabbāparvan*, Ch. 29; *Vaṇaparvan*, Ch. 253; *Bhīṣma-parvan*, Ch. 19; *Udyoga-parvan*, Chaps. 156-157 and 172-194, 198; *Kaṇva-parvan*, Ch. 6; *Virātaparvan*, Ch. 4; *Dronaparvan*, Ch. 22.

Drupada and his military power. It goes without saying that the neighbourly rivalry between the ruling clans of Kuru and Pañchāla developed into a war from time to time, sometimes the Kurus gaining supremacy over the Pañchālas and sometimes the Pañchālas over the Kurus, without however, having effected a permanent conquest.¹

The kingdom of Pañchāla continued to exist even after the Kurukshetra war. The Jaina *Vividhatīrthakalpa* mentions Harishena as the tenth *chakravartin* (king overlord) of Pañchāla. According to the same authority there arose another most powerful *sārvabhauma* king by the name of Brahmadatta.² The Mahāummagga Jātaka introduces us to Chūḷani Brahmadatta, the all-powerful king of Uttara Pañchāla, who had established his supremacy almost all over Jambudvīpa.³ One king Brahmadatta of Pañchāla is mentioned also in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.⁴ the Gaṇḍatindu Jātaka.⁵ and the Jaina *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.⁶ The last-mentioned work describes him as a fortunate but wicked king who having failed to act upon the wise counsel of his best advisers, was punished in hell. The Pāli Jātaka vividly narrates the ways in which he oppressed his subjects by taxation and made them suffer terribly his general misrule.

With the notoriety of Brahmadatta may be contrasted the noble tradition of Pravāhaṇa Jaivalī, the philosopher king of Pañchāla, to whom we are introduced in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*⁷ and *Chāndogya*⁸ Upanishads.

It is certain that by the time of the rise of Buddhism, Pañchāla, like Kuru, Matsya, and the rest, attained the position of a self-governing oligarchical republic. The name of Pañchāla is allowed to figure prominently in the list of sixteen mahājanapadas, or powerful countries.⁹ According to one of the Pāli Jātakas, Pañchāla had a formidable army 'consisting of foot-soldiers (*pattimati*), men skilful in fight (*sabbasamgāmakovidā*) and in the use of steel weapons' (*loha-vijjāalamkāra*).¹⁰

The Pañchālas find mention in the *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya as a ruling clan who represented a Saṅgha or oligarchical form of government.¹¹ This fact goes to prove that Pañchāla remained an independent state at least for a century after the demise of the Buddha, *i.e.*, until it was conquered by Mahāpadma Nanda¹² and brought under the sway of the monarchs of Magadha. As evidenced by Aśoka's R. E. XIII, Pañchāla was not counted in the 3rd century B. C. among the territories that enjoyed semi-independence within the Maurya empire. The *Gārgī-saṁhitā*, composed in the 2nd or 3rd century A. D., alludes to a Greek (Yavana) invasion of Sāketa, Pañchāla and Mathurā, which must have taken

¹ Law, *Ancient Med-Indian Ksatroya Tribes*, Vol. I, pp. 58-59.

² *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, p. 50.

³ Fausboll, *Jātaka*, VI, p. 329 ff.

⁴ *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Ādikāṇḍa*, Canto 33.

⁵ Fausboll, *Jātaka*, Vol. V, p. 98.

⁶ *Jaina Sūtras*, Pt. II, p. 61.

⁷ *Bṛihad. Ar. Up.*, VI, 1, 1.

⁸ *Chāndogya Up.*, V, 3, 1.

⁹ *Anuśāstra Nīkāya*, Vol. I, p. 213; Vol. IV, pp. 252, 256, 260.

¹⁰ Cowell, *Jātaka*, VI, p. 202. Fausboll, *Jātaka*, VI, p. 396.

¹¹ *Arthasāstra*, Shamasāstri's tr., p. 455. Cf. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Upanishad Lectures*, 1918, p. 165.

¹² Ray Chaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India* (4th Ed.), p. 188.

place in post-Asokan times.¹ But in about the beginning of the Christian era, Northern Pañchāla rose into temporary importance under the rule of Āshāḍhasena "who belonged to the royal family of Adhichchhatrā (Ahichchhatrā)". In one of the two Pabhosā cave inscriptions of Āshāḍhasena, the king of Adhichchhatra is described as the maternal uncle of king Brihaspatimitra, who was undoubtedly then the paramount sovereign of Magadha belonging to the Mitra dynasty. Thus the inscription conclusively proves that the royal family of Northern Pañchāla tried to establish their position by entering into a matrimonial alliance with the Mitras of Magadha. It does not seem probable that the status of Āshāḍhasena, the then king of Ahichchhatra, was in any way higher than that of a "gubernatorial or feudatory to the Magadha throne." Several old copper coins of the so-called Pañchāla series, that "are found in Oudh, the Basti district, and even Pāṭaliputra, as well as in Pañchāla", and bear the names of some Mitra kings, cannot be cited as conclusive evidence to prove that those Mitras had then "formed a local dynasty of North Pañchāla."²

The kingdom of Pañchāla must have sunk into oblivion during the Kushāṇa and Gupta ages, and we hear no more of it until Hiuen Tsang came to leave behind an account of the country of Ahichchhatra in the 7th century A. D., without specifying its political position. Panchāla was destined, however, to become the principal kingdom in Northern India from about 840-910 A. D. under Bhoja and his son, and to come again into importance in the 12th century under the Gaharwar kings.³

5 Religion and Culture of Pañchāla

At the very dawn of its history, Pañchāla became a very important centre of Vedic religion and culture. The Brahmins who had settled in different parts of Pañchāla and were patronised by its kings were to be counted not by hundreds and thousands but by millions.⁴ The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* records : "Speech sounds higher here among the Kuru-Pañchālas",⁵ the speech denoting the recitations of the Vedic texts. The capital of Pañchāla witnessed the performance of many Aśvamedha and Rājasūya sacrifices. The Gāthās were composed and current among the people regarding the meritorious acts and royal supremacy of some of its kings. The *Āitareya* and *Śāmkhāyana Aranyakas* introduce us to a famous Vedic teacher by the name of Pañchālachaṇḍa.⁶ The *Bṛihadāranyaka* and *Chhāndogya Upanishads* refer to Pravāhaṇa Jaivalī, the philosopher king of Pañchāla, to whose court flocked many seekers of truth including such great Brahmins as Uddālaka Āruṇi and his son Śvetaketu Āruṇeya.⁷ Śilaka Śālāvatya,

¹ Max Muller, *India, What can it teach us?*, p. 298.

² Raychaudhuri, *Political History*, 4th Ed., p. 327. For the list of kings mentioned in the Pañchāla coins, see Cunningham's *Coins of Ancient India*, pp. 81-84; R. D. Banerjee's *Prākīna Mudrā*, p. 107; Law, *Ancient Mid-Indian Kshatriya Tribes*, Vol. I, pp. 63-64. Allen, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, Ancient India, pp. cxvi ff.

³ Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. I, p. 27. [The recent excavations have proved that the most prosperous period of Ahichchhatra must have been the period of its independence under the so-called Mitra kings and the last period of the Gurjara Pratihāra kings of Northern India (8th-9th century A.D.). Stray coins of the early Pathan rulers are also found at the site—Ed.]

⁴ *Śatapatha Br.*, XIII, 5, 4, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, (S. B. E., Vol. XXVI), p. 50.

⁶ *Vedic India*, Vol. I, p. 469.

⁷ *Bṛhad. Ar. Up.* VI, 1, 1; *Chhāndogya Up.* V, 3, 1.

Chaikitāyana Dālbyha and Pravāhaṇa Jaivalī were three men of India of their age, who were well-versed in Udgītha or the significance of the mystic syllable. Droṇa, the great Brahmin teacher of archery of the Epic fame, became, according to the *Mahābhārata*, the king of Uttara-Pañchāla. Bābhravya who finds mention in the Rik-Prātiśākhya as the author of the Kramapāṭha of the Rīg-Veda is connected by the scholiast Uvaṭa with Pañchāla. Weber opines that Bābhravya Pañchāla, and the Pañchāla people through him, took a leading part in fixing and arranging the text of the *Rīg-Veda*.¹ The *Mahābhārata*, too, credits Gālava, a Pañchāla of the Bābhravya gotra with the authorship of the Kramapāṭha.²

Vātsyāyana in his *Kāmasūtra* seems to suggest that the *Rīg-Veda* came to be aptly called *Chatuṣṣhasṭi* ('The Sixty-four') from the arrangement of its hymns in eight Aṣṭakas of eight chapters each, which it had received at the hands of Gālava-Bābhravya.³ He frankly admits that his own treatise, *Kāmasūtra*, was only a later digest of an earlier elaborate treatise on the same subject composed by one Bābhravya of Pañchāla, the treatise which comprised 150 chapters and was divided into seven sections. "He thus admits that the great work of Bābhravya formed the ground-work of his own book". One out of the seventy sections of the *Kāmasūtra*, viz., the Sāṃprayogika, covering about a fourth part of the whole work, is entirely taken from Bābhravya.

It is well observed: "The Pañchāla people were evidently credited in ancient times with extraordinary powers in connection with matters relating to the sexes, extending even to a change of the natural sex, as we see in the case of Śikhaṇḍin, the son of the Pañchāla king, Drupada. Polyandry, as we see in the case of Draupadī Pañchālī, may be regarded as an ancient custom of the Pañchāla country."⁴

When Hiuen Tsang had visited Ahichchhatra (*i.e.*, North Pañchāla) in the 7th century A.D., its inhabitants were a people who loved religion, and were sincere and truthful.⁵ Hinduism and Buddhism flourished side by side. He saw there about ten Saṃghārāmas, containing 1,000 monks, belonging to the Inferior Vehicle, and nine Deva temples with 300 sectaries, who were of the Śaiva faith. The pilgrim definitely says that those sectaries worshipped Īvara *i.e.*, Mahādeva, and belonged to the order of 'ashes-sprinklers' (Pāśupata Śaivas). The place was known as a locality where Tathāgata had preached the Law for the sake of a Nāga-rāja for seven days. Beside this spot were to be seen four small stūpas.⁶

In the Jaina *Ucidhatīrthakalpa*, we have an interesting account of both Kāmpilva and Ahichchhatra as two among the well-known Jaina tīrthas. According to the Jaina authority, Ahichchhatra was the prosperous town in Kuru-jāṅgala where Lord Pārśvanātha was protected during rain and storm caused by

¹ Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, Eng. Tr. pp. 10, 34.

² *Mahābhārata*, Cal. Ed., *Saṃskṛitaparvan*, Ch. 342, verses 102-104. H. C. Chakladar, *Journal of the Department of Letters* (C. U.), Vol. IV, p. 88.

³ *Kāmasūtra*, (Bengal Ed.), pp. 93-94.

⁴ H. C. Chakladar, *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Vol. IV, p. 90.

⁵ According to Bharata's *Nāṭya-sūtra*, the people of Pañchāla were of dark blue complexion.

⁶ Beal, *Records of the Western World*, Vol. I, pp. 200-201. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, II, 331.

the demon. Kamāṭha, by the Nāga-king Dharaṇīndra, who coiled himself round the body of Pārśva and spread his thousand-hooded hood like a canopy over the head of the great Tīrthan̄kara. A brick wall of zig-zag shape is said to have been erected over the ground traversed by the Nāga king. The Jaina Saṅgha caused a shrine to be made in honour of Pārśva. To the east of this temple were seven Kuṇḍas full of pleasantly cool and clear water, where used to dwell sportful tortoises. And within and without were many wells and large tanks. Not far from this main shrine was another temple in the Siddha-kshetra of Pārśva where he was attended by Dharaṇīndra and his wife Padmāvatī. Near the brick-wall was to be seen an image of Ambā-devī with a lion as her vehicle along with an image of Neminātha. To the north of this shrine was a sacred tank, the waters and soil of which could cure leprosy. The Dhanvantarikūpa and Brahma-kuṇḍa in the neighbourhood possessed similar healing properties. The city contained many Hindu temples of Hari, Hara, Hiraṇyagarbha and Chaṇḍikā and Brahma-kuṇḍa and similar tīrthas. This very city was known to be the birthplace of the great Rishi Kṛishṇa.¹

As for the city of Kāmpilya we read that it was the place which was hallowed by these five auspicious incidents in the life of Vimalanātha, the 13th Tīrthan̄kara, who was a son of king Kṛitavarman by his queen Somādevī: The descent, the nativity, the coronation, the initiation, and the Jinahood, from which circumstance the city came also to be known by the name of Pañcha-kalyāṇaka.

Kāmpilya is claimed, as a city where Ārshamitra, the disciple of Kaundinya, who in his turn was the disciple of the Mahāgiri teachers of the Lakshmīhara Chaitya of Mithilā, came to reside two hundred and twenty years after the demise of Mahāvīra. The same city is claimed as the place where the Jaina saint Gardabhāli renounced the world and attained liberation. It is also claimed as a place where prince Gāgalī who afterwards became the king of Pṛisṭi-champā, was converted to Jainism by Gautama. The *Tīrthakalpa* also claims it as the place of which the powerful king, Durmukha, became a Pratyeka-Buddha. It was in this very city that the Mahāsati Draupadī, daughter of king Drupada, had chosen of her own accord five Pāṇḍavas as her husbands. Kāmpilya was known as the city of which the king Dharmaruchi was able to carry his whole army to Kāśī through the air by virtue of his piety, when the Lord of Kāśī picked up a quarrel with him for the alleged fault of having honoured an image of the Jinendra.²

The fame of Pañchāla rested not only on its having been an early centre of Vedic learning and the science of erotics and eugenics but also on its having become an important home of poetry in later times, say, during the reign of Bhoja. Rājasekhara in his *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, Ch. III, has paid a glowing tribute to the poets of Pañchāla.³

¹ *Vaidhatīrthakalpa*, p. 14. *Tattha pāṇḍarakāra-chaṇ jahā purao thio uragurāṇī Dharaṇīndro kudḍagaro sappai taḥā taḥā ittanveso karo. Ajja ev taḥā ca pāṇḍara-raṇaṇā dīsa. Sīri-Pāsasāmino Channo saṅghena kāṇḍam, etc., etc.*

² *Vaidhatīrthakalpa*, p. 50.

³ *Pañchāla-maṇḍala-bhāṣaṇe saḥasraḥ kaṇḍam*
Sūtra-mūlha Ksharati Kīṇchana Kāvyapathah

As the Mahā-ummagga Jātaka goes to prove, Northern (Southern ?) Pañchāla with the city of Kampilliya (Kāmpilya) as its capital was a very ancient home of Indian poetry. Many great poets and playwrights flourished there under royal patronage: King Uśānī Brahmadatta of Uttara Pañchāla is said to have employed all the local poets of ability to compose a melodious love-song praising the exquisite beauty of the princess Pañchāla-chaṇḍī, which, as the story goes, gained much popularity in Northern India.¹ This Jātaka gives also a vivid description of a highly artistic tunnel (*ummagga*, i.e., *sadaṅga*) dug out from the Ganges to the royal palace in Kāmpilya.

6 Ahichchhatra and the so-called MITRA coins

The two Pabhosā caves in the neighbourhood of Kauśāmbī preserve two inscriptions of Āshāḍhasena, king of Adhichchhatrā, in mixed dialect. The inscriptions record the fact of dedication of the caves concerned to the Kāśyapiya Arhats by king Āshāḍhasena. In one of them the donor, king Āshāḍhasena, is introduced as the maternal uncle of king Brihaspatimitra,² and in the other we have mention of four generations of kings beginning with Śaunakāyana: Āshāḍhasena, the son of king Bhāgavata and Vaihidarī: Bhāgavata, the son of Vaṅgapāla and Traivarnī: Vaṅgapāla, the son of Śaunakāyana.³ Allowing each king an average of twenty years as the period of reign, it may be suggested that Āshāḍhasena and his three predecessors had reigned in Ahichchhatrā for about a century. King Brihaspatimitra was undoubtedly a contemporary of Āshāḍhasena, and must have been a king of a country other than Ahichchhatrā or North Pañchāla. From the manner of description it is clear that the caves were excavated by Āshāḍhasena not in his own kingdom but in that of his nephew Brihaspatimitra. The Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela refers to one Brihaspatimitra as a contemporary king of Magadha (*Māgadhañ-cha rājānam Bahasatimitam*). It is not astonishing at all that two of the ancient Indian coins found at Kauśāmbī bear the legend of king Bahasatimita (Brihaspatimitra).⁴ Similar coins bearing the legend of other Mitra kings have been found at Kauśāmbī, at Ayodhyā, at Audumbara, at Mathurā, in Rohilkhand, and chiefly at Ahichchhatra or Rāmnagar. The so-called Pañchāla or Ahichchhatra coins alone bear the legend of Dhruvamitra, Sūryamitra, Phālgunīmitra, Bhānumitra, Bhūmimitra, Agnimitra, Jayamitra, Indramitra and Vishṇumitra, besides those of Rudragupta, Bhadrāghosha and Viśvapāla. A coin of Sūryamitra has been found at Ayodhyā along with those of Satyamitra, Saṅghamitra and Vijayamitra. Kauśāmbī can boast of two coins of Jyeshthamitra. One coin of Bhānu-

¹ Fausboll, *Jātaka*, VI, p. 410: *Rājā nipune kabba-kāre pakkosāpetrā bahum dhanam datvā dhītaram tesam dassatā, "tāṭa etissa rūpasampattim nissāya katham karothā" ti āha. Te atimanoharāṇe gītāni bandhutrā rājānam sāvayamsu. Rājā tesam bahum dhanam adāsi. Kavīnaṃ santikā natā sikkhotā samajjamaṇḍale pāyamsu, itī tāni utthāritāni ahesuṃ.* Reading slightly modified in the light of the Siamese edition.

² Lüders' *List* (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. X, app.), No. 904.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 905. [Recently a coin of Vaṅgapāla, misread in the first instance as Tagapāla, was secured from Rāmnagar, the ancient Ahichchhatra, by Mr. M. B. L. Dāi (*op. cit. Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. II, p. 116). The coin of [Viśva]-pāla published by Allen (*Cat. of Ancient India*, Pl. XXVII 4) may also belong to the same ruler. This clearly proves the historicity of the line of Āshāḍhasena and their connection with Ahichchhatra—Ed.]

⁴ Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India*, pp. 73-4.

[Allen, *op. cit.* § 107-9, discusses the coins of Brihaspatimitra and distinguishes two rulers of that name. It is with the second ruler, who is assigned to circa 100 B.C., that the Ahichchhatra ruler Āshāḍhasena was connected—Ed.]

mitra falls to the share of Audumbara. To Mathurā's share are to be allotted two coins, one bearing the legend of Gomitra, and the other that of Brahmamitra.¹

Who were those Mitra kings, and can they be identified with the Śuṅga and Śuṅgabhrītya Kāṇva kings mentioned in the Purāṇas? Were they the rulers of Ahichchhatra or North Pañchāla, or were they rulers of some other country? On these questions Cunningham's findings are as follows :

"As the coins which I am now about to describe are found in Rohilkhand, and chiefly at Ahichchhatra, Aonla, and Budaon, it is quite certain that they belong to North Pañchāla. It has been suggested that they belong to the Śuṅga kings, who ruled over North India after the Mauryas for 112 years, or from B. C. 178 to 66. But the assignment is uncertain, as only one of the coin names, Agnimitra, is found in the Purāṇic lists of the Śuṅgas. The dates, however, agree as all the coins have inscriptions in Aśoka characters. I incline rather to assign the coins to a local dynasty of Princes, as they are very rarely found beyond the limits of the North Pañchāla, which would not be the case did they belong to the paramount dynasty of the Śuṅgas."²

The relegation of the Mitras of the coins to Ahichchhatra or North Pañchāla is now out of the question in the face of the clear evidence of the Pabhosā cave inscription of Āshāḍhasena and the Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela cited above. If Bahasatimita (Bṛihaspatimitra) of the coins be the same person as Bahasatimita of these two inscriptions, we cannot but take him to be a paramount king of Magadhā. The connection of Indrāgnimitra and Brahmamitra with Magadhā may be easily inferred from the Bodh Gayā railing inscriptions of Kuraṅgī and Nāgadevī.³

As for the supposed connection of these kings with the Śuṅgas, Cunningham's finding is still the best and most sound in the field. The assignment is uncertain. The correspondence between the names of some of the Mitra kings of the coins and those of some of the Śuṅga and Kāṇva kings mentioned in the Purāṇas was sought to be established thus by Jayaswal :

Coin-name	Purāṇa-name
Agnimitra	Agnimitra
Bhānumitra	Vasumitra
Jethamitra	{ Vasujyeshtha Sujoyeshtha
Ghosha	Ghosha
Bhadrachosha	Ghoshavasu
Indramitra	Vajramitra
Devamitra	Devabhūti
Bhūmimitra	Bhūmimitra. ⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70 ff.

² *Coins of Ancient India*, p. 79.

³ Barua, *Gayā and Buddhagayā*, II, p. 75.

⁴ *JBORS*, Vol. III, Pt. IV, p. 479.

The proposed correspondence rests on an assumption the validity of which is highly questionable. Jayaswal has not succeeded in bringing forward any reliable evidence either from inscriptions or from literature to establish the identity of Pushyamitra, the founder of the Śūṅga dynasty, and Brihaspatimitra of the coins and inscriptions. Both Indramitra and Agnimitra of the coins may be the same person as Indrāgnimitra whose wife Āryā Kuraṅgī donated the Bodh Gayā railing. Brahnamitra, the successor of Indrāgnimitra, whose wife Nāgadevī, too, donated a pillar of the Bodh Gayā railing, is apparently the same king as Brahnamitra of the coins. Chronologically the Bodh Gayā railing is later than that of the Stūpa of Bharhut which was an erection of the Śūṅga period. Similarly Sūryamitra and Vishnumitra mentioned in the inscription of Gautamīmitra may be identified with their namesakes in the coins. Thus the problem of the Mitra kings of the coins must be left where it stood in the days of Cunningham. The Pabhosā cave inscription of Āshādhasena, the inscription of Gautamīmitra,¹ and the Mora brick-tablet of Yaśamitra,² leave no room for doubt that these Mitra kings entered into matrimonial alliances with the rulers of North Pañchāla and other neighbouring kingdoms. And Professor Ray Chaudhuri rightly observes : "It is not known in what relationship most of these Mitra kings stood to one another or to the celebrated families of the Śūṅgas and the Kāṇvas."³

The Copper-coins discovered at Ahichchhatra bear the legend of king Achyuta.⁴ Vincent A. Smith⁵ is inclined to think that this Achyuta is no other than Achyuta, a king of Northern India, who was uprooted by Samudragupta.⁶

¹ N. G. Majumdar in *IHQ*

² Vogel, in *JRAS*, 1912, p. 120.

³ *Political History of Ancient India* (4th Ed.), p. 335.

⁴ *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Vol. I, pp. 185-86

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 132-5.

⁶ Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, p. 7

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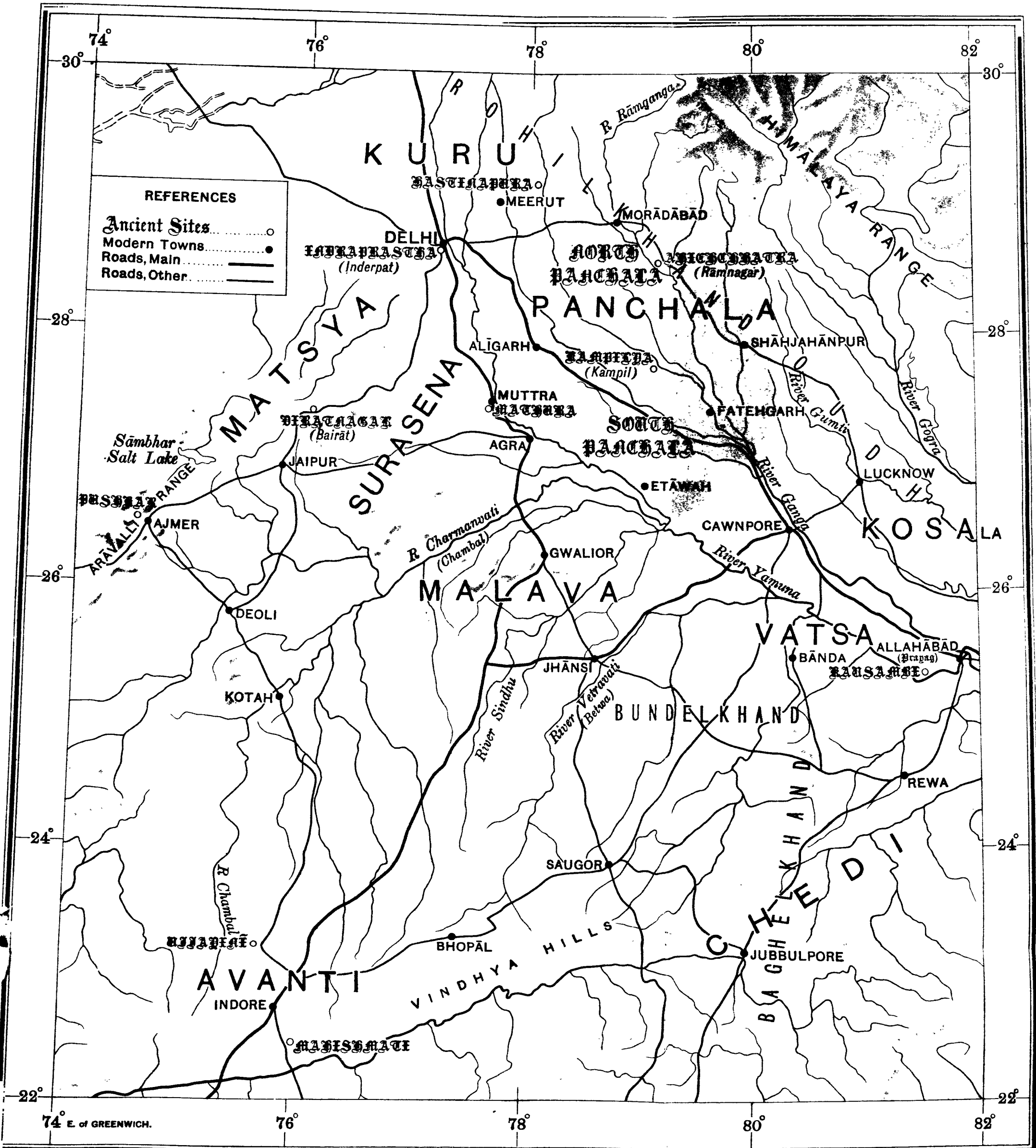
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